

Tim Linehan
166 Georgetown Drive
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Good morning. My name is Tim Linehan. I chair the Connecticut chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. On behalf of the chapter's 8,000 members I'm here to speak in support of:

Proposed Bill	Title	Position
S.B. 43	An Act Expanding The Recreational Land Use Act	Support
S.B. 90	An Act Concerning The Recreational Land Use Act	Support
H.B. 5254	An Act Expanding The Recreational Land Use Act	Support

We encourage the legislature to extend to municipal landowners the same liability protections that are available to the State and to private land owners.

During the past year AMC volunteers led over 1,100 hikes, backpacks, cross country ski trips, flat water and white water paddles, bike rides, rock and ice climbs, trail maintenance work parties, river clean-ups, and a variety of seminars on conservation and environmental issues.

Continued access to the trails, river access points, cliffs, and areas of natural history that are located on municipal land is crucial to maintaining the number and variety of activities that our chapter offers to the residents of Connecticut.

The potential for liability concerns to result in the closure of municipal properties to recreation is not speculation; it has already taken place.

Rock climbing provides an example. More than half of the 80 cliff faces listed in the 1982 edition of *Traprock – Connecticut Rock Climbs* are located on municipal land; all but a few have been closed. The result has been a loss of more than 370 individual rock climbs – including several routes that appear in lists of classic North American rock climbs. A few years ago, in an attempt to regain access to these areas, the AMC, the Access Fund, and Ragged Mountain Foundation, met with several municipal landowners to discuss their concerns. Potential liability was cited as the key reason why risk managers advised otherwise supportive municipal agents to restrict access and activities; the *Comvay* decision was specifically referenced as a reason for recreational closures.

One can understand a municipality's desire to protect its taxpayers from increased insurance premiums and deductibles, particularly when these costs would need to be absorbed by smaller towns. It's unfortunate that there are already restrictions on recreational access to some of our State's most notable natural resources. It would be a tremendous loss to the quality-of-life in Connecticut if *more* areas were closed to recreation due to increased liability concerns following the significant judgments of the past year.

The members of Connecticut AMC urge you to eliminate the risk of these potential future closures by providing municipalities with the same recreation use liability protection that is already available to other land owners.

Thank you.